



INDIANAPOLIS-MARION COUNTY FORENSIC SERVICES AGENCY

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EVIDENCE SUBMISSION GUIDELINE #3

DRUGS / CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

INTRODUCTION

The Drug Analysis Section of the I-MCFSA analyzes substances collected by law enforcement agencies suspected of containing an illegal or controlled dangerous substance as defined by the Controlled Substances Law listed in the Indiana Revised Statutes. The examination of evidence will not be performed at the I-MCFSA Laboratory unless the submitted items are evidence or material generated in the course of criminal investigations that is intended to support criminal prosecution or to further a criminal investigation.

A. SAMPLING, COLLECTING, PRESERVING, AND MARKING:

1. Only those items which are being used to file charges should be submitted for analysis.
2. If an item is to be submitted for both drug and fingerprint analysis, whenever possible the drug evidence (e.g. powder, tablets, vegetation, etc.) and container (e.g. paper bag, plastic bag, box, etc.) should be separated prior to submission to the laboratory. This separated evidence should be packaged and submitted as individual sub-items. If evidence cannot be separated, the outer plastic bag or box must be marked in order to identify the need for fingerprint work.
3. If an item is to be submitted for both drug and DNA analysis, handle the evidence as little as possible. Package and protect the evidence from contact with surfaces that other individuals contact. It is recommended that the suspect and evidence do not travel in the same vehicle. The outer plastic bag or box must be marked in order to identify the need for DNA work. An I-MCFSA Laboratory Request card **MUST** be completed and turned in with the evidence.
4. Marked tablets and capsules consistent with containing only non-controlled drugs (e. g. over-the-counter or prescription preparations) will not be analyzed. Exceptions would include when charges will be filed for legend drugs, precursors, dealing in look-a-like substance, dealing in a counterfeit substance, or dealing in a substance represented to be a controlled substance.
5. Items consisting of marked tablets or capsules in a prescription bottle for that drug with the bottle marked with the defendant's name will not be tested. Exceptions would include: prescription fraud cases, prescription tampering cases, tampering cases and death investigations.
6. Where an item is a large quantity of material, (e.g. over fifty pounds of marijuana) it is recommended that random samples should be withdrawn and submitted to the laboratory. Sample size submitted should exceed the required amount to change the class of the charges filed if desirable.
7. Where the evidence consists of large quantities of marijuana plants, the plants should be processed according to the I-MCFSA procedure published by IMPD and available at the IMPD property room counter for reading.
8. Paraphernalia (syringes or pipes etc.) and potential sharps (mirrors, glass, knives, etc.) should not be submitted except:
 - a. Where this is the ONLY evidence in the case or is needed for probable cause.

- b. The prosecuting attorney has requested the analysis.

B. PACKAGING:

1. All evidence should be submitted in a sealed condition.
2. Evidence should be packaged in suitable containers such as plastic bags and bear the following information at a minimum:
 - a. Submitting agency
 - b. Case number
 - c. Item number
3. Marijuana should be dried before placing in suitable containers for storage and submission to the laboratory. The I-MCFSA Laboratory does not have the facility to dry large amounts of marijuana, thus samples will be returned in the same condition that they were submitted. Plastic bags encourage the formation of mold, or in many cases, cause decomposition in articles such as marijuana, peyote plants, or wet materials. Water should be removed from water pipes.
4. Used syringes with needles will not generally be accepted for controlled substance analysis. These are potential sources for transmission of infectious diseases such as hepatitis and AIDS. Only when these are the only evidence will properly package and labeled hazardous sharps be tested.
5. Do not submit clothing. Remove suspected material from pockets and place in separate marked containers.
6. Guns, money or personal property should not be submitted unless they are to be examined by other forensic disciplines.
7. Evidence should be packaged separately to prevent cross contamination.
8. Evidence containing potential sharps (mirrors, bottles, knives, glass pipes, etc.) shall be packaged in puncture-resistant packaging.
9. Evidence containing liquids shall be packaged to minimize the risk of breakage and leakage.

C. EVIDENCE SCREENING

1. Forensic scientists in the I-MCFSA Drug Unit will screen evidence at submission, and report the findings to the Marion County Prosecutor's Screening Office.
2. In order to better serve the agencies that submit drug evidence to this laboratory, the I-MCFSA has a policy for evidence analysis.
 - a. If a paraphernalia item is in the same bag as loose drugs, it will not be tested. Cross-contamination is a real possibility with the ultra sensitive test methods. It is best to package paraphernalia items, (e.g. pipes, scales, syringes, razor blades, etc...), that need to be tested for residue in separate sealed evidence bags away from loose vegetation, powder and chunks.
 - b. If multiple paraphernalia items are packaged in the same bag, only one (1) positive item will be tested and reported. In the case that arises with the need for multiple items to be tested, each item should be packaged in a separate sealed evidence bag.
 - c. Paraphernalia that is in the same bag with measurable sized non-leaking packages of drug evidence, will not be tested. If that item is necessary to the successful adjudication, it should

be packaged in a separate sealed plastic evidence bag.

These procedures will allow the I-MCFSA chemistry unit to provide you with the most complete service possible in the shortest time.

3. Quantitative analysis (% purity) is a specialized testing provided for selected drugs only. All quantitation requests must be justified in writing (from supervisor or prosecutor) before the quantitation request will be approved.

D. RE-EXAMINATION

The I-MCFSA Laboratory does not routinely examine materials which have been previously examined. The re-examination of evidence must follow the SOP set out in the Quality Assurance Manual. Re-examination requests must be made in writing by the submitting agency with an endorsement by the prosecuting attorney having jurisdiction in the case to the I-MCFSA Director. The request is evaluated by the I-MCFSA Director.

E. EVIDENCE DESTRUCTION

The policy of the Indianapolis-Marion County Forensic Services Agency is that all drug evidence will be returned to the submitting agency for disposition. Controlled substances submitted for analysis will be retained by the laboratory during analysis only. When the analysis is complete, the evidence will be returned to the submitting agency as soon as possible. For further information on handling of controlled substances contact the I-MCFSA Chemistry Unit. The telephone number of the I-MCFSA Laboratory is: (317) 327-3670.

F DRUG EVIDENCE FINGERPRINTING

The Indianapolis-Marion County Forensic Services Agency has had success obtaining fingerprints from items seized in relation to narcotics arrests. If you need the evidence seized in your case processed for latent prints,

PLEASE TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS

- 1) mark the plastic bag or box containing the evidence "prints" or "to be printed"
- 2) fill out a "Request for Analysis" card.

By marking the evidence bag / box, you alert the chemist to the fact that this evidence is to be printed. Narcotic evidence is picked up on a daily basis and tested almost as soon as it gets to the lab. Without some marking the evidence would be opened in an expeditious manner and possibly handled by the chemist.

By filling out completely a request card, you can help the lab make sure that the items most relevant to your case are fingerprinted. The request cards are available at the front window of the property room. If you have any special information as to this case, you can put that information on that card.

For further information please contact the I-MCFSA laboratory at (317) 327-3670.

Evidence Submission Guideline #3 adapted from Indiana State Police Laboratory Physical Evidence Bulletins.

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